

Message from the Co-Chairs

As you know, this election season is a busy one in Arizona. A number of initiatives have been filed proposing substantial public policy changes for our state. In addition, the legislature has referred a number of issues to the ballot. Beyond these policy choices, Arizona voters will also be selecting a President, U.S. Senator, U.S. Congressmen, ninety members of the Legislature as well as local officials.

All important public policy recommendations should incorporate public input assembled through an appropriate public outreach process. In recognition of the importance of the work of the Task Force, we feel its efforts should be provided the greatest opportunity for thorough public discussion and debate. Our original schedule called for our public meetings on our findings and proposed recommendations to occur in September and October. There is however, a limit to the number of policy issues that can be simultaneously debated effectively in the public arena. It is unlikely that the Task Force's voice will be heard in the midst of a very active election season.

Therefore, in recognition of the cacophony of competing political and policy discussions that will occur leading up to the November election, we suggested to Governor Hull that the Task Force take some additional time to develop and refine our proposed recommendations and to conduct our public outreach meetings after the November election. The Governor has concurred in our

suggestion and we have developed a revised schedule for the Task Force. Our current draft would have the Task Force adopt its final report in mid-April, 2001.

The Task Force has been actively working to address a wide range of state-wide transportation policy issues including such complex issues as needs, revenues, overall system planning, governance, and planning and programming. This newsletter and upcoming issues will bring you up to date on Task Force discussions.

We hope you share our view that this decision will improve public outreach efforts and facilitate us achieving our goals and objectives. We look forward to seeing you at our public outreach meetings in 2001.

Sharon B. Megdal, Ph.D.
Co-Chair

Martin L. Shultz
Co-Chair

Important Dates

Public Meetings
January and February, 2001

Final Task Force Report
April, 2001

Task Force Retreat Highlights

The Task Force met to identify and prioritize overall transportation system goals and objectives. This summary reflects the results of these discussions.

Arizona must have an efficient, multi-modal transportation system that contributes to the overall quality of life of its citizens and serves the future transportation needs of the entire state. The transportation system should address the following goals identified by the Task Force.

- ▼ The principal long-range expectations for Arizona's transportation system are mobility, connectivity, economic vitality, reliability and system preservation.
- ▼ The roles and responsibilities of all participants in the system (including state government, local governments, tribal governments and regional planning entities) should be determined, integrated and better coordinated. Planning, programming, and reporting processes must be integrated to ensure a sustainable and reliable system.
- ▼ All federally funded state and local transportation programs should be incorporated into the transportation planning, programming and reporting processes.
- ▼ The governance of the system must establish clear accountability and strengthen public confidence in the system. Planning, funding (including taxation), implementation and performance monitoring responsibilities should be linked to achieve this goal.
- ▼ The planning and programming processes should facilitate integration of all modes. These processes should optimize each mode's strengths and minimize intermodal conflicts.
- ▼ Clear responsibility and authority for the transportation system should be established to encourage greater coordination and consistency. These responsibilities and authorities should be consistent with any recommended governance structure.
- ▼ Consistent, minimum statewide standards for quality and performance should be established. Based on these standards, system performance should be measured and reported.
- ▼ The overall system must have consistent, reliable, adequate, dedicated, but flexible, funding. All available sources, including federal funds, financing innovations, private sources and public-private partnerships, should be explored to maximize funding for the system.
- ▼ Dedicated transportation taxing authority should be established or expanded.
- ▼ Emphasis must be placed on operation and maintenance of system assets to protect the investment and to improve overall utilization of the system.
- ▼ Comprehensive financial management processes (including revenue forecasting techniques and expenditure management techniques) should be expanded to all aspects of the system.
- ▼ In order to be effective, land use plans must consider state and regional transportation plans, especially with respect to future transportation corridors. In turn, state and regional transportation plans should recognize local land use plans. The coordination and consideration of the overlaying transportation system plans and land use plans by all affected jurisdictions will increase the usefulness and benefits of those plans and will help avoid unintended conflicts in the future.

Source:
Full Task Force Retreat,
March 17th and 18th,
Casa Grande, Arizona

Continuing Activities of the Task Force

The March Retreat helped crystallize Task Force goals for Arizona's overall transportation system. As shown in the highlights, the Retreat helped outline future expectations for the system. The Retreat also helped guide future Task Force discussions.

The Task Force has taken a logical, multi-faceted approach to assess Arizona's transportation system. Task Force members felt strongly that they needed a common baseline to assess overall needs on the system. With the assistance of a consultant team, the Task Force is assessing transportation needs throughout the state.

In addition, the Task Force recognized that they needed a clear view of current revenues, reasonably projected revenues, as well as an assessment of how Arizona's transportation revenues compared with other states. A preliminary consultant report has been issued, with a final revenue assessment report expected shortly. The two reports – Needs and Revenues – will then be used to develop a set of "hypothetical" transportation plan alternatives to meet Arizona's long range transportation requirements. These alternative plan scenarios will be discussed by the Task Force and used to develop a comprehensive long-range transportation plan that will be submitted for public comment.

On a parallel track, the Task Force has also looked at a variety of areas that can help strengthen the transportation system. Some of the areas discussed in recent months include:

- ▼ the development and application of standardized transportation system performance measures

that would serve as the basis for planning and measuring the effectiveness of the State's multi-modal transportation system in the future. Suggested performance criteria included: mobility and accessibility; reliability of the system; cost effectiveness of the system; safety; and the system's effect on overall economic vitality.

- ▼ the importance of preserving future transportation corridors and the need to adopt appropriate access controls for major transportation facilities.
- ▼ future transportation developments, especially as they relate to intelligent transportation systems and various techniques for expanding the utilization of the existing transportation system capacity.


In between full Task Force meetings, the three committees of the Task Force have met on numerous occasions. In addition to the complex task of assessing future needs and revenues, the Definition of Needs, Revenues and Resources Committee has discussed a variety of topics including:

- ▼ methods and techniques for standardizing the collection and reporting of transportation system data.
- ▼ the "life cycle" management process used in connection with the Maricopa Regional Freeway system and how techniques used in that process might be expanded into a comprehensive statewide financial management process.



Continuing Activities of the Task Force

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The Planning and Programming Process Committee has met on several occasions to discuss potential improvements to the transportation processes at all levels within Arizona. Specific subjects included:

- ▼ alternative planning processes and procedures, based upon a review of the practices in sample states throughout the country.
- ▼ potential capacity enhancement strategies including improved design, improved operational techniques, enhanced utilization of traffic signal synchronization, plus expanded utilization of the transit system through van and car pools, and significantly increased express bus service.
- ▼ performance based planning in which performance measures are incorporated in the planning process and actual system operation data is collected and reported using the same measures, to ensure that the system is meeting expectations.

The Governance Committee has discussed issues including:

- ▼ accountability of the overall transportation system.
- ▼ citizens' needs and expectations.
- ▼ responsiveness of the current governance system to state, regional, and local needs.
- ▼ improving the relationship among transportation planning, design, funding, construction and operation.
- ▼ the need to balance local needs and desires with regional state needs and desires and vice versa.
- ▼ alternative governance structures based upon a review of governance structures in other states.

In Upcoming Issues

- ▼ Transportation Revenues in Arizona & How Our Taxes Compare with Other States
- ▼ Arizona's Long Term Transportation Needs
- ▼ Arizona's Transportation Alternatives - Recommendations from the Task Force
- ▼ Task Force Public Meeting Schedule

Future Activities

With the revised schedule, the Task Force and its Committees will have additional time to examine issues in greater detail as well as issues that might not otherwise receive a full discussion. Among the issues that will be discussed by the Task Force in the months ahead are:

- ▼ the unique transportation issues surrounding Arizona's tribal governments.
- ▼ transportation issues associated with aviation.
- ▼ the role of rail transport in the overall transportation system.
- ▼ further discussions of the relationship between transportation planning and land use planning.

The current schedule for the Task Force calls for the development of tentative recommendations in the last part of this calendar year. Those recommendations will be the subject of a series of public meetings held in January and February of 2001. On the basis of the feedback received during those meetings, the Task Force is scheduled to then prepare and submit its final report to the Governor by mid-April 2001.



Information concerning activities of the Task Force may be obtained from the Vision 21 Task Force Administrative Coordinator, Matt Carpenter, at 206 S. 17th Ave., 310B, Phoenix, AZ 85007, telephone 602.712.7865 or by e-mail at vision21@dot.state.az.us.

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